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June 1, 1961

**MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BUNDY**

**FROM: Marc Raskin**

**RE: Negotiable Positions on the Berlin Question**

For the past ten years the Western powers have demanded at conference after conference and in note after note that the two German states be reunited by free elections and that a thus reunified Germany should remain free to join the anti-Soviet NATO alliance. Throughout the same ten years, the Russians have demanded that Germany be reunified on a trick-laden basis which would give the East German communist apparatus a chance to gain control over all of Germany. Thus each side has made non-negotiable demands on each other. Each side pretended to seek the reunification of Germany on its own terms, while actually caring very little about ending the partition. What each side really wanted was the preservation of the status quo, although neither was willing to admit it for fear of alienating the Germans. The Western powers have been unwilling to relinquish a German military participation in Western defense. The Soviet Union has been unwilling to give up one of its satellites for fear of the effect upon the others.

The exception, from the Soviet point of view, was the status quo as to West Berlin. Here was a Western enclave, situated in the heart of the East German satellite republic--an enclave which was not only a Western outpost and a showcase of freedom but an escape hatch through which the most useful

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people, technically and professionally in the East German population were steadily fleeing into West Germany. Nikita Khrushchev has described West Berlin as a "bone in his throat"--a "cancer which must be eliminated."

From the political-military point of view, West Berlin is of no particular value, except that the West has incurred a moral liability to protect its 2,250,000 inhabitants from being overrun by communism. Strategically, the Western position is almost untenable. Economically, it is unprofitable. Legally, the West has foolishly neglected to obtain an ironclad agreement as to its right of access.

In November 1958, Premier Khrushchev similarly demanded that the Western powers get out of Berlin within six months. For the first time, the Soviet leader frankly stated that no one really wanted to reunify Germany except perhaps the Germans, and that, if the Germans wished to achieve reunification, it was up to the two German states to work out the problem.

There followed then the exploratory visit to Moscow of Prime Minister Macmillan, the fruitless meeting of the foreign ministers at Geneva, and, finally, the withdrawal of the ultimatum by Mr. Khrushchev during his visit to Washington and President Eisenhower's consequent expression of willingness to discuss the problem of Berlin.

Both sides have said that the situation in Berlin is "abnormal." The question is: "Can its abnormality be corrected without correcting the abnormality of a partitioned Germany?"

The Western powers must ultimately face a choice which has all along been inescapable. Whether we want a German military contribution to NATO

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or the reunification of the two German states. Having both is an obvious contradiction to the present situation.

Either choice implies a different sort of solution for the problem of Berlin.

If the Western powers decide that they cannot forego German participation in Western defense, then they must accept the more or less permanent partition of Germany, which implies the recognition of the East German state and acceptance of the status quo in Eastern Europe. In that case, it would be unrealistic to expect West Berlin to remain as a Western-controlled island of freedom in the heart of the East German state.

The most that could in these circumstances be hoped for would be the reunification of Berlin under United Nations authority, with the United Nations possibly exercising that authority through a re-established Four-Power Kommandatura. In such a case the Four-Power Kommandatura would act as agents of the United Nations--all wearing the U.N. uniform, following general U.N. directives laid down by the Secretary-General. Note well, it could well be the case that on an issue like this the Soviets might be interested in going along ~~as~~ thus protecting the neutral person concept in the United Nations. Even then, it is difficult to see how a gradually increasing economic dependence of the city upon the surrounding communist territory could be avoided.

Another alternative would be the exchange of territories with East Germany so that West Berlin falls within the East German zone and West Germany receives in return a piece of territory equal or greater in size

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to West Berlin. The suggested area would be Magdeburg. The United States position might also include East German reparation for territory as well as indemnification costs of moving. West Berliners would have the choice of moving to Magdeburg and the citizens of Magdeburg would have the choice of moving to West Berlin. The United States could offer a foreign aid commitment to West Germany to build Magdeburg into a major city in West Germany. Obviously, there are many emotional problems involved with such a plan. However, these could be alleviated through careful and orderly planning which would begin the process of moving both ways, starting in one or two areas. The West Germans would not be in favor of such a plan although their position would be directly related to the amount of aid which they received for building Magdeburg if such a move would take place. The East Germans, on the other hand, would favor such a plan since Magdeburg even with all its natural beauty does not seem to be a major value center in the East German establishment. Depending on the way the United States and the rest of the world committed itself to the building of a new city in Magdeburg will pretty well decide what psychological effect such a plan would have. A further problem of course is the sensitivity of people like Billie Brandt. It is one thing to be the mayor of Berlin. It is another thing to be the mayor of Magdeburg. However, again this problem can be solved by making Magdeburg a major center of the Western world.

A third alternative is for the Western powers to decide that they want German reunification more than they want a German military contribution to NATO. They would then put forward a proposal under which the two

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German states would be enabled to find their way toward reunification without outside interference of any sort. Obviously, this would require the withdrawal of Soviet coercive power from East Germany--an end which could not be attained without a countervailing withdrawal of Anglo-French-American forces perhaps no further than to the West bank of the Rhine.

Were a German settlement to be sought along these lines, the answer to the Berlin problem would be an agreement to preserve the status quo in that city, perhaps with some modifications, until reunification had taken place and Berlin could once more become the capital of a reunited Germany.

These, in broad terms, seem to be the three general negotiable alternatives that exist.

The first would undoubtedly be easier to negotiate with the Russians. However, these are the drawbacks:

1. Were the Western powers to accept Germany's permanent partition, they could do so only over the violent objection of the West German government--an objection which would probably be sustained by the majority of the West German population. In that event, we should doubt the value of West Germany as an ally. In other words, by choosing this alternative, the Western powers would, in our judgment, destroy the value of the very thing for the sake of which they had chosen it; namely, the retention of an effective German contribution to Western defense.

2. A rearmed West Germany would in these circumstances not only be an unreliable ally but a serious danger to peace. Western acceptance of partition would almost certainly reawaken German nationalism. Reawakened

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German nationalism, resentful against both West and East, could lead either to war or--and this seems far more likely--to a German-Soviet deal in which Germany would purchase its reunification and perhaps the return of some of its Polish-held eastern territory at the price of alliance with the Soviet bloc. Such things have happened before.

The second plan would be hard to negotiate and would require considerable diplomatic skill. It would mean in all a very great clarification in our policy toward West Germany and a new level of commitment. Furthermore, people would conceive of this scheme as a "refugee" idea and as "giving up" unless Western governments would be able to <sup>refocus</sup> ~~reexamine~~ the Berlin question.

The Polish Rapacki Plan may be a point of departure in shaping a Western proposal for reunifying Germany at the price of its military neutralization. The virtue of this Polish proposal is that it provides for the non-discriminatory military neutralization of Germany, since it applies not only to the two German states but to Poland and Czechoslovakia as well. Austria is already debarred from military alliances with either East or West. Switzerland and Sweden are neutral by choice. Hungary and Denmark might well be added to the neutral belt. Thus, there would be no question--as there was in the Versailles Treaty--of imposing demilitarization or neutralization upon a single nation. Indeed, there would be no question of imposition at all. The Western proposal would be shaped with the full consent of the German people.

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Obviously, debarment from military alliances would not mean that the states in the neutralized area would be deprived of the right to maintain or enter into whatever non-military association they might wish. West Germany's exit from NATO would not mean that it would have to withdraw from Euratom or the Common Market. Nor would East Germany's, Poland's and Czechoslovakia's exit from the Warsaw Pact involve the rupture of their political and economic ties to the Soviet bloc. On the contrary, one might hope that the creation of a militarily neutralized belt would tend to increase East-West economic cooperation and thus gradually to restore the European trading community.

There are two major reasons why this possibility should be explored in general.

The first is a conviction that this is the sort of proposal the United States ought to make, in its own interest, in Europe's interest and in the interest of peace.

The second reason is a belief that a solution of this sort is in Russia's interest no less than in the interest of the West. Mr. Khrushchev knows that the Soviet Union's coercive position in Eastern Europe is in the long run untenable--that it will ultimately alienate peoples who might otherwise, of their own free will, choose close association with the Soviet Union. Mr. Khrushchev would probably liquidate that coercive position if, as a quid pro quo, he could obtain the withdrawal of American military power from the Continent and the liquidation of American bases on the Soviet periphery.

Obviously, the United States cannot, in the present circumstances,

withdraw altogether from the Continent. Nor can it change its house system overnight. But the United States could recognize that this is what it eventually wants to do, when and if peace in Europe and elsewhere is assured.

A. The United States could offer to withdraw behind the Rhine, if Russia were to withdraw behind the Oder.

B. The United States could, pending the present talks, refrain from building new bases such as the Turkish one.

The United States could, pending the outcome of its efforts to halt the arms race, refrain from spreading nuclear weapons systems around the world, and discourage its own war industries from rebuilding West Germany into an arsenal.

Ten years ago, our government said that it would never acquiesce in German rearmament. In 1950, our government demanded German troops for NATO but said that it would never allow Germany to rebuild its own war industries. In 1959, our government agreed to give Germany everything except nuclear warheads and has permitted our war industries to go into partnership with Krupp, Kloeckner, Heinkel and Messerschmidt in recreating German capacity to build almost every kind of war equipment.

The chances for halting the arms race and reaching a European settlement are diminished through German rearmament. Such actions vitiate negotiations. (S) This approach runs counter to the wishes of Chancellor Adenauer, and for reasons not entirely clear, President de Gaulle of France, who has no interest whatever in the reunification of Germany.



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On the other hand, the United Kingdom and Canada would probably support the third alternative outlined here.